

# REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2490

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor from H.R. 2490.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. OBERSTAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I see the distinguished minority whip on the floor, or I saw him, and would like to inquire about the schedule for tomorrow on behalf of our committee to know what the program is for the further consideration of Amtrak legislation which was put off last night. Is there a program for the further consideration of Amtrak?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman asking the question. It seems that we have a lot of conflicting schedules going on after 6 o'clock, and at 6 o'clock, and we felt it was such an important issue that we would put it off and bring up the debate on finalizing the bill on reauthorization of Amtrak the first thing in the morning starting around 9 o'clock.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, would that be preceded by 1-minute speeches?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I am not advised but I would assume, as is usually the custom on the end of the week, if we have any 1-minute speeches they will be severely limited.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, then the gentleman can assure us that the Amtrak legislation will come up tomorrow?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, as much as anybody can assure anybody of anything around this place.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, the Stones concert will proceed tonight?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the Rolling Stones are in town and several members were going, but there are other events also. There is a Habitat for Humanity event going on and there are also many Members who have their spouses in town and there is an event honoring the spouses and the Members at the Kennedy Center.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I was just concerned that the Stones might be rolling tonight, but the trains might not be next week.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, we want those trains to roll.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, so we would be able to proceed on that legislation and I appreciate it.

# PRESIDENT IS URGED TO GIVE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SCHOOL CHILDREN A CHANCE AT QUALITY EDUCATION

(Mr. GINGRICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I simply wanted to rise in praise of two Americans who are trying to help the children of Washington. Ted Forstmann and John Walton are giving \$3 million each to a scholarship fund for low-income children in the District of Columbia.

I think every Member of the House should look at this. Here are two people who do not live in Washington, but they love their national capital and they believe that the children of their national capital should have an opportunity to go to a school that is safe, drug-free, and where real learning occurs and where these children have a chance for a better future.

I think for Ted Forstmann and John Walton to go out of their way to help the national capital is a good thing, but I think it also sends a signal to the President that everybody in public housing should have the opportunity to choose a school for their children that is safe and disciplined and has education, and that that should not just be reserved to the two highest elected officials living in public housing, but everybody in public housing ought to have that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we can have a chance in the bill we passed just 2 weeks ago to give 2,000 children an opportunity to have a scholarship to let their parents have the right to choose, and I would urge the President: "Please accept the chance for the poorest children of our national capital to have a chance to go to school that is safe and drug-free with real learning."

[From the Washington Times, Oct. 14, 1997]

## VOUCHER FUND GETS \$6 MILLION

(By Susan Ferrechio)

Two private businessmen have donated \$6 million to a small D.C. school voucher agency that will use the cash to help pay for 1,000 low-income city students to attend private schools.

Theodore J. Forstmann, one of the donors, said at a news conference yesterday he was donating his share of the money because the D.C. public school system is "really awful" and he wants to help some escape a notoriously troubled system where they cannot learn or get ahead. He said he wants to encourage "citizens taking responsibility for problems and taking action."

The Washington Scholarship Fund, a privately financed charity, pays for 460 D.C. children to attend private school this year.

The agency will use the first of three \$2 million infusions to pay up to \$1,700 in tuition to each eligible student, beginning in September 1998. The students now served by the fund come from households that earn an average of \$18,000 each year.

John Walton, like Mr. Forstmann a business investor and a believer in vouchers, is matching the \$3 million donation to the agency, which was started in 1993 by a former Department of Education analyst.

"There was a real need in Washington, D.C., to help the children," said Mr. Forstmann, who is chairman of the scholarship fund's board of directors.

Mr. Forstmann, of New York, and Mr. Walton, of San Diego, have donated money to voucher programs in other cities, including a program in New York that helps pay private-school tuition for 40,000 low-income students.

The donation comes as Congress is debating a plan to spend public money on private school vouchers for D.C. students.

The House next week will resume debate on a plan in the D.C. Budget Bill to spend \$7 million next year on 2,000 scholarships for low-income students to attend private schools.

That plan, which would offer up to \$3,200 a year to pay for tuition, books or transportation to private schools, is supported by many Republicans but opposed by President Bill Clinton.

Washington Scholarship Fund president and founder Douglas D. Dewey said students are chosen by lottery to receive money from the agency, which pays up to half of one year's tuition.

He said the agency, which is run by three employees, will raise an additional \$800,000 this year.

Lora Watkins, a secretary for the Department of Commerce, took her three daughters out of Watkins Elementary in Southeast this year. She pays \$4,600 in tuition to send them to a nearby Catholic school, Our Lady Queen of Peace. The scholarship fund subsidizes \$2,300 for her tuition costs.

"I was just desperate to get them out of the public school, no matter what," said Mrs. Watkins. "They're learning a whole lot more, it's just totally different. The education is so much better."

Enrollment in the city school system of 78,500 students is declining, school buildings are crumbling, and students test poorly.

The system has been under reform since November by an Emergency Board of Trustees and chief executive officer appointed by the D.C. financial control board.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 17, 1997]

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE HAVING A CHANCE MAKES

(By William Raspberry)

Ted Forstmann isn't much of a philosopher—quite the refreshing opposite. He comes across, over lunch, as a down-to-earth rich guy who, for reasons even he has trouble articulating, just wants to give something back.

So he and his friend and fellow entrepreneur, John Walton, are giving \$3 million each to a scholarship fund for low-income children of the District.

He's sure it's the right thing to do, even though he is pretty much inventing his philanthropic largess on the fly.

"You've heard that biblical passage about it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven?" said Forstmann, co-founder and senior partner of the \$16 billion New York investment firm Forstmann Little & Co. "I think what that's saying is that if you achieve success and don't do something worthwhile with it, then—well, you're just sort of pathetic."

He's trying to do something worthwhile with his success. But why schools? In part, he says, because of what he learned at his first job, at a reform school, and in part because he believes schools—Andover, Yale, Columbia—have been a huge factor in his own success. Why D.C.?

Why not D.C.? Besides, Douglas Dean Dewey, who runs the Washington Scholarship Fund, asked him to help.

Forstmann, athletically trim at 57, has just left a press conference announcing the